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FIGHT FOR COMMUNISM • LUCHE POR COMUNISMO • PLP

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From California to Paris to Athens, Workers and Students Fight Back



CALIFORNIA, February 17 — University campuses in this state have erupted against the racism sparked by a racist "Compton cookout party" that mocked black history month. The so-called "Cookout" urged all participants to wear chains, cheap clothes and speak very loudly. Female participants were encouraged to be "ghetto chicks."

Students at UC San Diego led the way with a series of protests and walkouts condemning the "cookout." Days later a noose was hung in the school library and more protests erupted.

Thus far, the anti-racist campaign has spread to other colleges in the UC system. At UC Irvine demonstrating students were arrested after a sit-in at the Chancellor's office against racism and the budget cuts that face the entire California system. Students at UC Berkeley rebelled against the budget cuts. Many other campuses experienced racist incidents and students have responded with mass protests and related actions.

Many students are linking the racist "cookout" to the decreasing number of black students enrolled each year in the California university system, now down to 2% — victimized by the ending of affirmative action and the lower income resulting from racist unemployment and skyrocketing tuition costs. ✪





In Paris, signs read: "Equality of rights among workers — we demand the legalization of all undocumented [workers]. See article "Immigrants' Strike Mirrors Need to 'Smash All Borders,' page 5.



MUNI workers and riders, unite, march and rally. See article "Angry MUNI Drivers Reject Hacks' Give-backs, Fight for Unity," page 3.



Workers protesting in Athens. See article "Angry Workers, Youth Strike vs. Bosses' Crisis Cuts," page 5.

Mass Murderer in Liberal Guise:

Obama's Wider Wars Headed to Global Clash

In office just over a year, Obama has achieved mixed results for his beleaguered U.S. ruling-class masters. On the home front, Obama still struggles to pass heath care "reforms" which they need both for cost-cutting as well as for putting the system under tighter government control to deal with all the competing capitalists in this industry. Globally, however, he works wonders for the billionaire owners of J.P. Morgan Chase, Exxon Mobil, and allied U.S. imperialists.

For their benefit, liberal Obama has extended the deadly reach of the U.S. war machine in ways right-winger Bush, Jr., could never achieve. He's added Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia and Haiti to the ruling class's ever-expanding theaters of operation. Israel may soon contain U.S. combat units joining forces with its military to deal forcefully with the Middle-East tinderbox (see below). Obama's Afghan surge is brutally "securing" towns along the route of the proposed Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline.

As for Iraq, Obama has shattered his campaign promise to withdraw U.S. troops, who will remain indefinitely to safeguard the oilfields they seized, and to threaten neighboring Iran. A February 24 NY Times op-ed piece by Thomas Ricks, an "expert" from the Rockefeller-funded Center for a New American Security, urged Obama to "find a way to keep 30,000 to 50,000 United States service members in Iraq for many years to come."

Mounting Massacres in Obama's Afghan-Pakistan Surge

Although many who voted for Obama now express disenchantment, his liberal cover still enables him to get away with murder, literally. If Bush, Jr., had ordered Navy Seals to shoot teen-aged Somali pirates or send CIA/Special Operations death squads and Predator drones into Pakistan and Yemen, the anti-war outcry would be deafening. But Obama pulled off these atrocities plus a U.S. military takeover in Haiti, with appalling, racist neglect of the stricken, while posing as a "humanitarian." (See CHALLENGE editorial, 3/3) U.S. rulers' motives in Haiti, are in fact drenched in potential oil reserves, as usual. (*See article, page 4*)

Obama's Afghan surge force seems to commit a massacre a week, with impunity. "The Afghan human rights commission reported Wednesday that 28 civilians had been killed so far in NATO's offensive on the Taliban stronghold of Marja." (NY Times, 2/24)

Noncombatant deaths are sure to mount even higher as Obama targets more densely populated areas: "[T]he United States military is looking ahead toward taking the fight to Kandahar...a much bigger prize than Marja. The city is the second largest in Afghanistan" (NYT, 2/26). The Times forgot to mention what makes Kandahar such a prize — it straddles the TAPI gas pipeline route.

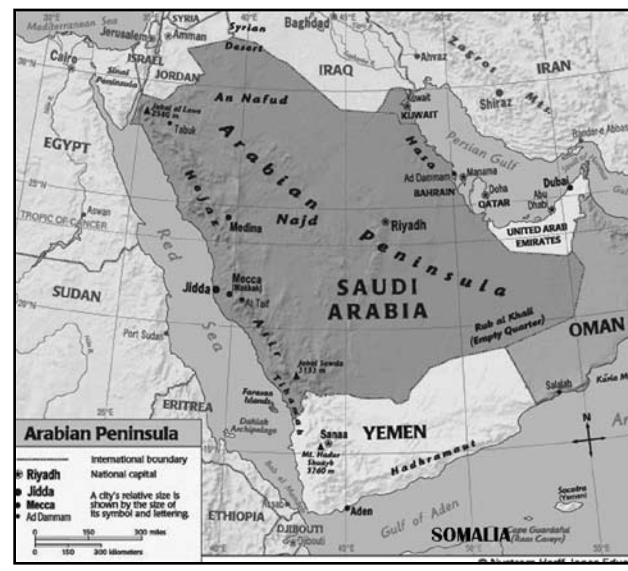
But the free hand in relatively small wars that Obama's liberal credentials — and the Pentagon's unchallenged killing power — gives U.S. rulers has limits. Their rivalry with China and Russia, powers which are far stronger than the Taliban or al-Qaeda, is intensifying. U.S. generals' boasts of success in Iraq and Afghanistan cannot hide the fact that Chinese- and Russian-proxy Iran is relentlessly pursuing nuclear weapons.



Imperialist Dogfight over Mid-East Oil Intensifies; Is It Nuke Time?

U.S. bosses are considering three basic counterstrategies, one ineffective and the other two incredibly dangerous:

• Plan A, already in place, involves negotiations and sanctions. Teheran's oil-soaked ayatollahs, backed by Beijing and Moscow, mock them.



• In Plan B, which U.S. rulers seem to favor, or at least are resigned to, Iran supposedly gets the bomb. Then the U.S. initiates a Mid-East version of the Cold War — with ally Israel (already possessing nuclear bombs) and the oil-rich, pro-U.S. parts of the region like Saudi Arabia — under a U.S. nuclear umbrella. But actual U.S. nuclear response would have a shorter fuse than during the U.S.-Soviet standoff.

The journal "Foreign Affairs," the U.S. imperialist establishment's leading public mouthpiece, laid out the ground rules in its March/April 2010 issue: "When Washington publicly presents its policy on how to contain a nuclear Iran, it should be explicit: no [Iranian] initiation of conventional wars against other countries; no use or transfer of its nuclear weapons; and no stepped-up support for terrorist or subversive activities....[T]he price of Iran's violating these three prohibitions could be U.S. retaliation by any and all means necessary, up to and including nuclear weapons." Nuclear-armed China and Russia would hardly stay on the sidelines.

The article continues: "Washington should also be prepared to deploy U.S. troops on Israeli soil as a tripwire."

• Plan C has the U.S. (or more likely, Israel) pre-emptively wiping out Iran's nascent nukes in air strikes. Such an attack would increase tension in U.S.-vs.-Chinese and Russian flashpoints from the Koreas to Taiwan to Georgia to Poland. Iran would unleash its monster "weapon": closing the Strait of Hormuz, though which most of Iraq's and much of Saudi Arabia's oil exports flow.

Our Party has long held that inter-imperialist rivalry inevitably ends in world war (see World Wars I and II). For workers to back imperialist servant Obama is thus a dead-end. But so is supporting any new politician the rulers put in the White House to mislead us. The only sane course is to reject the electoral circus altogether and build a party — the PLP — that can eventually eliminate the billionaire class and their endless profit-driven wars through communist revolution. ✪

OUR FIGHT

★Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to destroy capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.

★Only the dictatorship of the working class — communism — can provide a lasting solution to the disaster that is today's world for billions of people. This cannot be done through electoral politics, but requires a revolutionary movement and a mass Red Army led by PLP.

★Worldwide capitalism, in its relentless drive for profit, inevitably leads to war, fascism, poverty, disease, starvation and environmental destruction. The capitalist class, through its state power — governments, armies, police, schools and culture — maintains a dictatorship over the world's workers. The capitalist dictatorship supports, and is supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, individualism and religion.

★While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions worldwide. Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges. Russia and China did not establish communism.

★Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. Everyone will share in society's benefits and burdens.

★Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of "race." Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit black, Latino, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class.

★Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women — sexism — and divisive gender roles created by the class society.

★Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

★Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion's false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to their needs and aspirations.

★Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!

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Why Articles Are Not Signed

The fact that CHALLENGE/PLP articles are not signed grows from PLP's criticism of the cult of the individual in the former socialist Soviet Union and China. We do not want to encourage the possibility of building up a "following" around any particular individual. While an article may be written by one person, the final version is based on collective discussion and criticism. Many times this collective discussion even precedes an individual's writing of an article.

Angry MUNI Drivers Reject Hacks' Give-backs, Fight for Unity

SAN FRANCISCO, March 1 — Operators in the MUNI transit system, members of Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 250a, bucked the national trend of accepting concessions negotiated by union mis-leaders. Almost 60% rejected a union leadership demand that we give back $14 million over two years. The TWU leadership's newsletter boasted, "We are part of the solution" while admitting to "have already given up over $4.5 million in salary savings due to service cuts and other give-backs." Momentarily, the TWU leadership has lost its ability to sell "deals" with the ideology of fear, as it collaborates with the city's ruling class to justify cutbacks.

Following the rejection, operators blocked both a "revote" and hiring an "insider operative from SF Mayor Newsom" for an expensive PR campaign. Instead, they're organizing a drive to directly reach out to passengers through protests, on the buses and at public meetings. They're uniting with California public workers on March 4.

A Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) February 28 hearing reflected an atmosphere of class war, with operators and passengers exposing the racist and anti-working-class proposed cuts.

'No time to breathe...'

In an interview, one operator declared: "Did you blame the tellers when the banks" crashed? Others commented, "The government bails out the rich Bank of America which is foreclosing on our homes — operators should not bail out MUNI"; "The banks created this, let them solve it!" Another said MUNI had "to reach out to transit workers throughout California." Others spoke about how the Schedule cuts "rob me of my humanity, no time to pick up the seniors, go to the bathroom, or even breathe." Some operators advocated job actions — sick-outs, work-to-rule slowdowns and ultimately strikes.

Leaflets circulated opposing the union-leadership strategy of "giving up," demanding that the downtown big business community handle their deficit by paying the Transit Impact Fee. PLP members circulated CHALLENGE articles and leaflets with a class analysis of the transit industry.

Weeks of calculated, racist vilification of the workers ensued in the mass media, among politicians, think-tanks, and the SF MTA (which runs MUNI). Since the '60s, driving for MUNI was identified as a "black job." Now, there are many immigrant workers. In this context, calling paid medical benefits for family members "an undeserved bonus" encourages the idea that these workers are "undeserving."

• SFMTA president Nolan threatened to double the cost of discounted monthly passes for seniors, the disabled and youth and cut service 10%, without the workers' give-backs. Ultimately, the discounts were saved but Noland demanded more concessions from workers. Service cuts impact poorer, isolated, black and Latino neighborhoods and predominately their youth the most as resources are concentrated on rush-hour service.

• "The first and foremost concern for MUNI should be 'labor reform,'" said Gabriel Metcalf, executive director of the think-tank SPUR" (SF Chronicle, 2/8), meaning less for workers' wages and benefits, and more speed-up.

• Metcalf and Supervisor Sean Elsbernd called for part-timing driver jobs because they "just sit around doing nothing and get paid" in mid-day (more thinly-veiled racism).

• Elsbernd is using the Ballot Initiative process to mobilize the public against drivers with a Charter amendment to change the process determining drivers' wages and benefits.

The political direction in this fight to "make the Downtown bosses pay" and for passenger-worker unity comes from the intertwining of communist organizing over many years at MUNI and mass anger among operators over this new stage of attacks on unionized workers. First the bosses decimated manufacturing as an entry-level job (without college). Now it's dismantling public-sector jobs like transit with the "deficit" justification that "there's no money."



Communists have named the cause — capitalism — during 40 years of class struggle in transit combined with ideological agitation and education. Communists expose the system as one based on competition for maximum profits that motivates these bankers\CEOs, not personality, greed or political party. Inter-imperialist rivalry (capitalists of different nations competing for world domination) is part of the engine of capitalism that drives the deficit. PLP has advanced communist class consciousness over many years at MUNI. That means:

• Uniting with other workers, rejecting the "PR" approach, and going directly to the working-class public; unity with other transit workers; recognizing that our labor creates profits for the Downtown bosses; and job actions can bring them to a halt.

• Recognizing a capitalist class and system dictates this crisis; therefore, they should pay for it."

• Viewing capitalism as a whole system; the same banks that caused the attacks on our jobs have also foreclosed our houses, cut education, increased medical expenses and the war budget.

• Organizing against U.S. imperialism; opposing

continued on p. 6

Need Worker-Student Unity, Red Ideas vs. NYC Transit Bosses

NEW YORK, NY, February 28 — The MTA (Metropolitan Transit Authority) is threatening a wave of racist attacks on the city's transit riders and workers. The agency claims an $800 million budget deficit and is demanding cuts to student metro-cards, layoffs and a possible fare hike in 2011. The MTA also appealed a legally binding arbitration award for city bus and subway workers, denying them raises.

In every attack — student metro-cards, the fare increases and the workers' contract — black, Latino and immigrant workers are the majority affected. New York State Governor David Paterson, its first black governor, even floated the idea of raising taxes in the city where it would affect mostly black and Latino workers to pay for commuter rails ridden mainly by white people from the suburbs.

The problem is capitalism — not corruption or mis-management (*see box at right*). The prosperity of the ruling class depends on the misery of the working class and racist super-exploitation. PLP participates in every fight-back to unite the world's working class for communist revolution. Under communism workers will organize mass transportation for our needs, not Wall Street's profits. PLP has organized students to oppose cuts to their metro-cards and fights to unite workers and students against the MTA and the racist capitalism system.

A new leadership took office on New Year's Day in the Transport Workers Union Local 100. They promised mass militant anti-boss action. After the new leadership's first week on the job they downed more than 20 buses in one day in one barn during a union safety inspection. The message to the MTA and transit workers is that the fight between management and the union is on. But workers who spoke with a CHALLENGE reporter say that's how the old union president, Roger Toussaint, started; "then he screwed us like everybody else." Toussaint, once a self-described radical, proved to be a collaborator with management. He called off the December 2005 transit strike just days before the Christmas Holidays and forced workers to accept a post-strike contract with significant give-backs.

Just like Toussaint, the new union leadership promotes the idea of "good politicians" who are workers' friends. But under capitalism, politicians around the world openly opposed workers during strikes — often illegal and violent — that won some workers' unions safety rules, medical benefits and pensions. And the bosses use their state power to eventually reverse these gains.

Many transit workers want the union to fight for more safety, wages and benefits. We know that the bosses use unions to cool down struggle and mislead workers. As we struggle inside the union and out, to organize workers to fight the bosses' cuts, we are bringing communist ideas into the battle. Transit workers must unite with students and other workers, not politicians who keep debt service payments to banks as a law (*see box*). Lasting victory can only come by building a movement to overthrow capitalism and establish a communist worker-led society with no profit and exploitation. ✪

The MTA: Wall Street's ATM

A Track Equipment Maintainer Kevin Maloney explained in a letter to the civil-service newspaper "The Chief" (10/09), the real cause of the MTA's budget woes is "debt service," not out-of-control labor costs.

Riders, mainly black and Latino and immigrant workers, pay 55% of the MTA's funds. To fill the budget gap created by 20 years of cuts to government funding, lawmakers and the MTA bosses colluded with major banks to borrow money in the form of bonds. In 2010 alone "substantially in excess" of $920 million dollars will go to "debt service," paying the interest on those bonds (*mta.info*). This is the fastest growing part of the MTA's deficit (*Straphangers Campaign*).

The liberal Drum Major Institute reported (4/9), "Between 2003 and 2008, debt payments and non-labor expenses grew by 45 percent and 40 percent, respectively, whereas labor costs grew by 16 percent. Debt payments are expected to grow another 51 percent by 2012, a financially unsustainable trend." The MTA projects' average annual debt service payments will amount to $1.9 billion dollars a year through 2030. (*"MTA Investor Information," mta.info*). That's nearly one of every four dollars of the MTA budget. And all of these payments are legal requirements under New York State law!

Capitalist competition, not individual greed, forces the MTA's bosses to maximize debt-service profits for banks. Increased military and economic rivalry between imperialists — the world's most powerful capitalist nations — is forcing bosses around the globe to exploit "their" workers harder than competitors. Banks and politicians using a public agency to maximize private revenue is in line with U.S. bosses' strategy to maintain supremacy against rising powers like China, Russia and the European Union.

Boston CHALLENGE Readers Expose Haiti-Katrina Racism

BOSTON, MA, February 3 — Two weeks after the earthquake in Haiti, it was standing room only at a meeting of the student club, Pizza and Politics, on our community college campus. The initial comments students made showed very little political consciousness. In response to the first discussion question, "Who or what is to blame for the social catastrophe, besides mother nature?" students thought it was ridiculous to introduce a political analysis of the role of imperialism and capitalism in the catastrophe. Many, including Haitian-Americans, reflected the same racism in their comments that are implied by TV and radio announcers; "Haitians are crazy," meaning that in the face of chaos, Haitians will resort to a dog-eat-dog mentality.

But students responded very positively when CHALLENGE readers brought in an anti-imperialist perspective, explaining how colonialist and imperialist policies devastated the country and left it vulnerable to mother nature. They spoke of the capitalist-controlled aid efforts, compared Haiti to New Orleans after Katrina, exposed the racism and paternalism of the media. They also spoke of the proud and rebellious history of Haiti's working class.

By the end of the discussion, some of the same students who initially resisted a political analysis were expressing anger toward all the rich countries of the world and blaming the capitalist system for the devastation in Haiti. A new CHALLENGE reader was heartened at how the discussion clearly progressed "in the direction of communism."

Many students expressed the desire to organize an aid effort that would bring the aid directly to the people. The club is also planning a forum that will bring political understanding to the campus. PL'ers and our friends have a very important role to play at this working-class, largely immigrant college. The crisis in Haiti gives us an opportunity to expose the racism and utter failure of capitalism and to build international class solidarity — workers helping workers — an antidote to the cynical individualism that students resort to when they don't see an alternative to capitalist greed and inequality. ✪

Racist U.S. Haiti Invasion: Energy Wars, 'Aid' Sham

Obama invaded Haiti to secure U.S. capitalists' access to energy supplies, not to aid the working class there, as token relief efforts show. (See CHALLENGE, 3/3.) Haiti may itself possess significant oil and gas reserves. Bloomberg News (2/26) reports, "The January 12 earthquake was on a fault line that passes near potential gas reserves, said Stephen Pierce, a geologist who worked in the region for 30 years for companies including the former Mobil Corp. The quake may have cracked rock formations along the fault, allowing gas or oil to temporarily seep toward the surface….



2008 — Workers in Haiti Protest Against Rising Food Prices

"The Greater Antilles, which includes Cuba, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico and their offshore waters, probably hold at least 142 million barrels of oil and 159 billion cubic feet of gas, according to a 2000 report by the U.S. Geological Survey. Undiscovered amounts may be as high as 941 million barrels of oil and 1.2 trillion cubic feet of gas…."

It's hardly a coincidence that a month after Cubapetroleo announced discovery of one of the world's largest oilfields in the deep waters off Cuba, Russian President Medvedev flew to Cuba to sign an agreement to develop Cuban oil. And a week before that, China's president Hu Jintao met Cuba's president Raul Castro to sign an agreement to modernize Cuban ports and undoubtedly discussed the country's oil discovery.

Obama's Main Target: Venezuela's Oil Treasure

But while the jury may be out on Haiti's possible hydrocarbon bonanza, U.S. rulers have identified nearby enemy Venezuela as potentially another Saudi Arabia. Britain's government-controlled BBC noted (1/23), amid the U.S. build-up in Haiti, "Scientists working for the U.S. Geological Survey say Venezuela's Orinoco belt region holds twice as much petroleum as previously thought….[T]he area could yield more than 500 billion barrels of crude oil…. Saudi Arabia has proven reserves of 260 billion barrels."

By establishing U.S. army, air and naval bases in Haiti moments after the quake, Obama sent a clear message about U.S. military supremacy to his oil-soaked, fake leftist Venezuelan foe Hugo Chavez. To hammer home the point, Obama diverted the first of the Navy's brand-new fleet of Littoral Combat Ships — specifically designed for U.S. imperialism's latest naval need for coastal invasion of oil-rich nations — from California to the Caribbean shores of Colombia and Venezuela.

"The USS Freedom (LCS 1), has entered service in the Caribbean, joining the U.S. Navy drug interdiction patrol….. [T]he Freedom headed south on February 15th and [on] the 22nd intercepted its first drug-smuggling boat off the Colombian coast." (Strategy Page, 2/28) Drugs are secondary to U.S. bosses. They use them to help control their domestic working class. On the other hand, U.S. imperialists use oil to control dependent nations and wage war on rival states. ✪

Solidarity, Not Charity: Profs, Students Back Haiti's Workers

NEW YORK CITY, February 19 — More than 180 CUNY professors, staff members and students packed the union hall tonight for an "Evening of Solidarity with the People of Haiti." The event kicked off with a delicious dinner of Haitian food, and continued with traditional Haitian folk music performed by a classical guitarist. Members of the union's International Committee distributed a sheet of brief commentaries on Haiti from radical historians and novelists like Jacques Stephen Alexis.

The evening had two goals: to raise thousands of dollars for relief work in Haiti (which it did) and to provide a critical explanation of why the January 12th earthquake resulted in so many deaths, injuries and homelessness. Two CUNY professors, both from Haiti, explained how the earthquake was not a natural but rather a social disaster, or as one speaker termed it, a "poverty disaster." It was largely the poor who perished when their poorly-constructed homes, schools and workplaces collapsed. The small but wealthy Haitian elite, residing in their mansions on the hills above Port-au-Prince, went relatively unscathed.

One of the professors noted how the U.S. media has emphasized Haitian poverty but neglected to mention the country's inequality — how 5% of the population controls 46% of the wealth. The media also neglect to mention how the backbreaking labor of Haitian slaves once enriched French plantation owners and bankers, and how in recent years U.S. companies like Sears, G.E. and Wal-Mart profited handsomely from Haitian sweatshop labor. The speaker explained how U.S. trade policy had impoverished Haitian farmers, who then swelled the shantytowns of Port-au-Prince, which were devastated by the earthquake.



The second speaker, a long-time Haitian activist, was in Haiti when the earthquake struck. He met a friend whose mother died in the quake, but his friend put off mourning until he finished organizing shelter and food for the survivors. It is this spirit of collectivity and courage on the part of ordinary Haitians that draws this professor back to the island.

Both professors warned that the U.S. and capitalist institutions like the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank will use the disaster to restructure the Haitian economy to benefit U.S. corporations. The 20,000 heavily-armed U.S. troops in Haiti are there to mainly ensure that Haiti remains a neo-colony of the U.S., a haven for U.S. sweatshops, and will allow the U.S. to build military bases in this strategically-located Caribbean nation.

A union leader quoted William Blake's line that "Pity would be no more, if we did not make somebody poor" to emphasize how important it is for people to understand the social causes of disasters like Katrina in New Orleans and now Haiti. She emphasized that our goal is not charity but solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Haiti. Later, another professor made clear that it was racist capitalism, not the earthquake, that had caused the deaths of 250,000 Haitians and left a million homeless. He argued that true solidarity would be to build an international movement aimed at overthrowing the monstrous system that has impoverished most Haitians and billions of other workers around the world. He cited the union's past support for striking teachers in Mexico and Colombia as positive examples of international labor solidarity and urged the union to demand "U.S. Marines Out of Haiti!" today.

This evening of solidarity ended with people suggesting having forums on many campuses, so that thousands of students and faculty can learn the truth about Haiti. ✪

Turkey's Workers Battle Cops over Job Cuts

ANKARA, TURKEY, February 26 — The strike of TEKEL tobacco workers is now more than 10 weeks old. The strike erupted after the government decided to close all the company warehouses, eliminating 12,000 jobs, as part of privatizing the government-run tobacco company. The strikers and their families descended on the capital and set up a tent-city to protest the job cuts.

Acording to Turkish labor law, workers who are laid off due to privatization are supposed to be placed in jobs elsewhere, with full benefits. But the only "job" the TEKEL workers have found is actually fighting for one.

The strikers and their supporters have clashed with the police, the bosses' hired thugs. On December 16, the cops attacked a rally in front of the headquarters of the ruling AKP party. The following day in a nearby park, police erected barricades and attacked protesters with water hoses, tear gas and clubs. After that the workers moved their encampment to the headquarters of Türk-Is, the Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions, who have failed to answer the bosses' attacks with militant strikes or demonstrations.

Capitalist labor laws aren't worth the paper they are written on, especially in the face of a worldwide financial crisis that is spreading poverty and war to everything it touches. The more workers fight back against these attacks, we create a better atmosphere to learn that a system that can't provide jobs should be smashed. Poverty, war and racist terror are all the bosses have to offer. The only way to stop them is by building a mass international PLP and fighting for communism. That is the most important victory that we can win in the class struggle. ✪

Greece: Angry Workers, Youth Strike vs. Bosses' Crisis Cuts



ATHENS, GREECE, February 26 — More than 20,000 workers marched to this city's center as part of the second 24-hour general strike in two weeks, closing airports, public transportation and schools. Cops fired tear gas at youth throwing stones and paint near the Parliament buildings. Workers carried banners declaring, "Tax the Rich" and "Hands off our pension funds."

Workers are protesting the rulers' austerity program demanded by the World Bank which will force the working class to pay the price for the crisis capitalism has created. European Union bosses are pushing the program to deal with a potential default of a national debt of $400 billion. The situation is similar to that which caused the U.S. banking crisis, and involves some of the very same U.S. banks

The bosses' government has imposed a wage freeze and bonus cuts, and is expected to raise the value-added-tax by two percentage points, raise fuel prices and abolish a month's additional pay received by public- and private-sector workers.

"What else are they gong to cut," said Kiki Oikonomou, employed at a state school for disabled children, "the air we breathe? This is like a jail sentence." (NY Times, 2/25)

"If people see the minority living a good life and their wages plummeting, they're going to take to the streets," predicted Haralambos Dramantis, employed by the state power board. "We haven't seen the big uprising yet but it will come."

These 24-hour strikes reflect the anger and militancy of the working class, but they can only produce a real "big uprising" — revolution — if workers trace the cause of the bosses' crisis to capitalism itself. And that can only happen if communists are present and lead the working class in that direction. Unfortunately, that kind of leadership is lacking currently in Greece. ✪

France: Immigrants' Strike Mirrors Need to 'Smash All Borders'

PARIS, February 24 — "Everyone here is a worker who has no rights," declared Mahamadou Doucansy, among the undocumented immigrant workers who have been striking to win "legal" status. "They have been working in France for years, paying into social security, paying taxes and not one has documents," continued Doucansy, who has been working here in construction since October, 2001, for the minimum wage. He is one of 250 strikers occupying the premises of the Job Training Insurance Fund since February 2. They are preparing for a police attack to evict them.

All told the cops have violently removed sit-downers from 50 occupied sites during the four-month strike, but the thousands of immigrant workers are holding fast. The solidarity from other workers and students here and from abroad has helped sustain them. (See letter to CHALLENGE, 3/3.)

This strike defies the bosses' policy of super-exploiting such workers, holding them hostage to poverty wages under threat of deportation but without whose work whole industries could not function. It brings to the fore the bosses' anti-working class and racist attacks based on borders established by national ruling classes.

Citizen-worker support for these immigrant strikers has international political significance since it helps to raise sharply the need of workers worldwide to smash the bosses' borders. This kind of unity is essential to prepare workers to take the only road that can free our class from capitalism exploitation, the road to communist revolution. ✪

Link French Colonialism to Attack on Immigrants' Rights



PARIS, February 27 — A demonstration of 7,000 people demanded the abolition of the Ministry of Immigration and National Identity and the "legalization" of all undocumented workers. They linked France's treatment of undocumented workers to its history as an imperialist colonial power. They chanted "Besson, Sarkozy, it's over, the time of colonies." Besson is the minister of immigration and "national identity"; Sarkozy is the president of France. Eighty-five organizations supported the march to the Immigration Ministry building.

The demonstration was part of the "anti-colonial week," February 19 to 28. Patrick Farbiaz, one of the organizers, declared, "We would like to show that there is a link between the colonialism of yesterday and that of today in the way that the descendants of immigrants and undocumented immigrants are treated."

LETTERS

Another View on Jackie Robinson and Paul Robeson

A letter in CHALLENGE (3/3/), commented on an article in a previous issue (2/3) on the busting of Jim Crow in U.S. baseball and on one line in a letter (2/17) describing the article as "awesome." The March 3 letter writer felt that, "Jackie Robinson's career was [not] a positive anti-racist development of the civil rights movement," saying that in writing about this topic "we should choose fighters who devoted their lives to the working class," such as Paul Robeson. This raises two points: the content of the article itself and the relationship between Robinson and Paul Robeson.

Firstly, the article itself was *not* about "choosing" Robinson as a "fighter who devoted his life to the working class." Its theme was the major role of communists in cracking baseball's Jim Crow. It described the intense campaign the Communist Party, and especially its Daily Worker sportswriter Lester Rodney, waged in making it a mass issue: picket lines at ball parks, 150 Daily Worker articles, forcing tryouts of black ball players by major league teams (generally ignored by the racist owners) and spreading the issue in the trade unions. The fact that Robinson became baseball's first black player was incidental to the article. It certainly did not paint him as an anti-racist hero like Paul Robeson.

However, Robinson's signing led to hundreds of black (and also Latino) players playing before — and being cheered by — millions of black, Latino and white fans and, I think, contributed to feelings of multi-racial unity throughout the working class. It helped break Jim Crow barriers in Southern (and Northern) hotels, restaurants and stadiums.

Obviously, this did not end, or even appreciably reduce, racism in capitalist society as a whole. Only communist revolution can destroy racism.

However, while it was true that Robinson succumbed to the pressure of Dodger-owner Branch Rickey and black misleaders in testifying against Robeson at a HUAC hearing, Robinson had two sides. Most of his testimony condemned racism (a fact ignored by the racist capitalist press). He declared that "racial discrimination is not "a creation of Communist imagination." ("Journal of Sports History," Summer 1979). "The fact that it is a Communist who denounces injustice in the courts, police brutality and lynching when it happens doesn't change the truth of their charges…"

"Lynchers Our Chief Enemy Jackie Tells 'Red' Probers," was the front-page headline in the black newspaper, the Philadelphia Afro-American." HUAC didn't want to hear that.

"While in military service in World War II,…stationed at…[Fort Hood, Texas], Robinson was court-martialed…for challenging the Jim Crow tradition which dictated that blacks should sit in the rear of a military bus." (Journal of Sports) This was long before Rosa Parks.

Two years after the hearing, in the Dodger dugout before a game, a Daily Worker sportswriter showed Robinson articles reporting the KKK-type attack on Robeson at Peekskill, NY. "Jackie read the articles all the way through and then…—where other players and sportswriters could hear—…he said. 'This is a damned shame and I don't care who knows it….Paul Robeson is a great man and they should respect him.' ("Press Box Red")

In his 1972 autobiography, "I Never Had It Made," Robinson wrote: "I would reject such an invitation [to testify against Robeson] if offered now….I have grown wiser and closer to painful truths about America's destructiveness. And I do have increased respect for Paul Robeson, who…sacrificed himself [and] his career…because, I believe, he was sincerely trying to help his people."

Yes, in 1947, when "the chips were down," Robinson criticized Robeson. But that was not the whole story. Robinson was part of a sequence of events that, due to the efforts of communists, made a dent in Jim Crow racism. And I think, in that sense, his career was a "positive anti-racist development."

Red Baseball Fan

911 Truth Movement: A Chance for the Left?

The 911 Truth Movement, like all mass movements, has a left, center, and right. Over time, the contradictions between these segments will increase as decisions about the direction of the movement narrow. For instance, now that it has been shown by reputable experts in their fields that the events of 9/11, as explained by the official voices, could not have possibly happened in the manner that we have been led to believe, the investigation of this mass murder can take on a more concrete appearance. There is no longer the choice between "What happened?" and "What to do about it?" Now there is only "What to do about it?" Our choices narrow, and as they do, we are pointed in certain directions.

We can expect the right to develop around ideas designed to stunt and divert the growth of the movement. The center, as always, will be fluid. The left will become increasingly preoccupied with destination scenarios, and the differences between factions will grow, in time, fierce.

This has been the growth cycle of political mass movements. In the U.S. We should look at the history of those movements, for what they reveal to us about ourselves. In my youth in PLP, we were involved in those mass movements.

If PLP wishes to participate in this new mass movement, it has a chance to have an influence. If not, the Party will lose the opportunity to develop and grow within that movement to unearth the truth about what happened that day.

Skeptical engineer

In Memoriam: A Beloved Hospital Worker

An environmental service worker at a Brooklyn hospital, known to his coworkers as "A.D.," passed away at the age of 54 on December 28, 2009. His life, shortened by the capitalist health care system, was spent in service to the working class. He was on the frontline of making the hospital a safe and clean environment for the working-class patients. He gave his time and energy to PLP as well, helping to distribute CHALLENGE in the hospital and cooking food for May Day celebrations.

In mid-December, he began complaining of severe pain in his knees and so took time off and visited his doctor. As a diabetic, he was concerned about his blood uric acid, high levels of which can lead to gout. The day after he visited the doctor he had a stroke and was rushed to the very same hospital he gave many years of dedicated service. In the emergency room, the care he needed was not immediately given. From the emergency room, he was admitted to a floor. Even on the floor, the care he needed was not provided. A.D. suffered another stroke; this time a code was called, summoning emergency attention from doctors and nurses, but it was too late.

At A.D.'s funeral service, a delegate from the hospital gave a passionate speech, reflecting on A.D.'s short life. He spoke of his dedication to the job and his hope that he could provide a healthy environment for the patients. He will be sorely missed by his comrades here. ✪

MUNI Drivers' Fight

continued from p. 3

the trillions spent on oil wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and seeing U.S. corporate robbery worldwide as directly hurting U.S. workers.

A friend told people of the impact of communists in the class struggle: "In a washing machine, you have the water, the soap and the clothes but if you don't have the agitator, you can't get the dirt out." Someone else declared, "I've heard all this from you before, but now it's clear what you were talking about." CHALLENGE distribution and its content played a central role in this ideological struggle, with follow-up and study groups having a critical imapact.

To escalate this battle, we need more communists to make all these connections among our coworkers. Strictly focusing on "just surviving this budget deficit", as the union leadership does, will not prepare us for the battles ahead as the U.S. capitalist class tries to save itself by destroying workers' living standards. During this long process, U.S. capitalism's decline will draw more workers into harder fights. Communists in PLP are in the fight. We will advance the long-term strategy of overthrowing capitalism and constructing a society where transit jobs serve the working class and fulfill many drivers' aspirations for meaningful work; schedules will be about taking workers where they need to go, not delivering a workforce for the profit needs of the Downtown bosses.

(Next: Communism as a solution to serve the working class in transit.)

Hospital Workers' Anti-Racist Fight + CHALLENGE = The Right Rx

NASSAU COUNTY, NY, February 20 — Grievances and labor laws or class struggle? How do we win co-workers who have been temporarily co-opted by the bosses' games of favoritism, racism and sexism? Can white workers be won to understand that racism hurts them? How is the goal of communist revolution connected to these problems?

These are some of the questions threaded through meetings of hospital workers as we try to organize against the bosses' attacks.

One meeting several weeks ago began with a hospital worker passing out a recent CHALLENGE article written about the workers' fights. Then he made sure everyone got the newest paper. From there began a lively debate about how to fight the hospital bosses.

In the weeks before the meeting a flyer mysteriously appeared all over the hospital. It publicized the attacks on workers in various departments. In many cases these attacks were clearly racist, since they appear to be restricted to black workers. Several housekeeping workers were just fired and workers from another department had been written up and suspended. The flyer called on workers to organize to fight back.

After the flyer, the fired workers were reinstated. The workers did involve the union with their terminations, but the assessment at this meeting was that the flyer definitely played a role in the bosses reversing the firings. At the same time the bosses and the union leaders began threatening anyone they suspected was associated with the flyer.

The rehiring of the fired workers and the reaction from the bosses and union leaders fueled a lively debate. Some of the workers wanted to understandably focus on the write-ups and the technicalities of the grievance cases. Other workers connected these attacks to the bigger things going on around us like the capitalist economic crisis, widening wars and deeper fascism.

The workers who had received write-ups do see the disciplines as racist and are dissatisfied with many of the union delegates whom they view as either in the bosses' pockets or unwilling to fight militantly. From this point the debate began between the ideas of fighting the bosses mainly by union grievances and the bosses' labor laws versus developing class struggle against the attacks and building to communist revolution. That first meeting ended with the consensus that the workers would work on the grievance cases at the same time we'd work to build a rank-and-file fight.

At another meeting we heard reports that the threats from the bosses and the union leaders continue against the suspected "trouble-makers." Also, another worker was fired. The debate continued between relying on grievances and labor laws versus class struggle and communist revolution. Another point of discussion this time was the need to win white workers to understand how racism hurts them.

The workers at this meeting made plans to continue the fight against the racist firings and write-ups. Several of them want to join a PLP study-action group. It's no surprise since many of them are part of CHALLENGE networks. ✪

Unemployment: Capitalism's Killing Fields

As CHALLENGE has long reported, unemployment is a capitalist killer. Now the NY Times (2/25) has surveyed a number of studies proving this point — although, naturally, this bosses' mouthpiece doesn't trace unemployment to the profit system. It simply states that, "A growing body of evidence suggests that layoffs can have profound health consequences." It then reports:

• A Yale study "found that layoffs more than doubled the risk of heart attack and stroke among older workers."

• An Albany, NY State University 2009 study "found that a person who lost a job had an 83% greater chance of developing a stress-related health problem."

• A 2009 paper published by a Columbia University economist and a Chicago Federal Reserve researcher concluded that "during the recession of the early 1980s…death rates among high-seniority male workers jumped by 50% to 100% in the year after a job loss."

Even the Threat of Job Loss Causes Death

Furthermore, fear of losing one's job can be more deadly than the actual layoff itself. The Times quotes a 2009 University of Michigan study which "found that 'persistent perceived job insecurity' was itself a powerful predictor of poor health and might even be more damaging than actual job loss."

This was supported by events at the ArcelorMittal steel plant in Lackawanna, NY: "The anxiety among the 260 workers…actually began months, even years, before the company announced in mid-December 2008 that it was closing." Even before it closed last April, it was discovered that "at least a half-dozen workers… had coronary problems dating back to 2006." Three, all in relatively good health, died of heart attacks within weeks of one another.

All these latest studies only confirm a 1976 Congressional report which attempted to "estimate the cost of human suffering of people being out of work." (NYT, 10/31/76) The report, based on 40 years of statistics from the Great Depression in the 1930s through 1973, concluded that when unemployment rose 1.4% in 1970 it led directly to the death of over 30,000 workers in the next five years, from stress-related ailments (strokes, heart and kidney) plus suicides. In fact, Committee testimony stated that, "The national rate of suicide in the U.S. can be viewed as an economic indicator," so close is the link between joblessness and workers' violent deaths."

Consider, if a 1.4% rise in unemployment leads to 30,000 deaths over the following five years, how many deaths will result from the present Great Recession. Its recent 10% rate is more than double the prior 4.5% (supposedly "normal" for capitalism). That would mean 100,000 dead over the next five years. Do the math!

That's only the "official" jobless rate. The real rate is over 20% (see CHALLENGE, 3/3).

Racist Unemployment

The overall figures become twice as devastating for black, Latino, Asian, immigrant and Native American workers, because racist discrimination, dating back to slavery and before, causes double rates of joblessness for these groups. The unemployment rate for Native Americans hovers around 80%! Racism nets the bosses extra trillions in profits because it enables them to pay these workers a good deal less than white workers.

This is also true for the long-range related effects of joblessness on workers' families, through malnutrition, mental anguish and untreated sicknesses because of the unemployment-caused loss of health insurance. Infant mortality rates show dramatic increases within one to two years of a recession. Johns Hopkins professor Dr. Harvey Brenner told Congress that "short-term general hospital admissions…respond very sharply to adverse changes in the economy as do mental hospital admissions, for an unbroken period of about 127 years in the U.S."

Unemployment is integral to capitalism and has existed since the birth of the system. Bosses compete against each other for maximum profits. Each one tries to produce as much as possible to capture the market. This inevitably causes overproduction: the market cannot buy all that's produced. So bosses must resort to curtailing production, meaning mass layoffs — the "boom-and-bust" cycle — to try to maintain profits.

Unemployment can only be eradicated by eradicating capitalism. That requires a violent communist revolution. Building Progressive Labor Party to achieve this goal is a continuing struggle until we finish them off, ending bosses and profits and their overwhelming mass violence that destroys hundreds of millions of lives through unemployment, racism and wars. ✪

RED EYE ON THE NEWS

Below are excerpts from mainstream newspapers that may be of use for our readers. Abbreviations: NYT=New York Times, GW=Guardian Weekly, LAT=Los Angeles Times

Best choice: revolutionary action

NYT, 2/18 — To the editor: Our elected representatives serve only themselves and the…lobbyists who have bought their votes with campaign cash.

As more and more of us lose our jobs, our homes, our savings and our hope because of this systematic corruption, we will see…that the people we have sent to Washington have sold us out. When enough of us realize this, we will have a choice to make: we can address the corruption through public financing of election campaigns, or we can address it through violence. It is sure to be one or the other….

Expert blames Katrina havoc on US

NYT, 2/11 — Dr. van Heerden…rose to prominence as an expert on storms….

In the years before Hurricane Katrina, in 2005, he sounded alarms about the potentially devastating impact of a major storm in New Orleans despite 40 years of hurricane protection efforts.

After the storm, he vehemently criticized the Army Corps of Engineers on television and in print, arguing that engineering mistakes …had led to most of the death and destruction in New Orleans….

He said he was told by [university] administrators that his verbal barbs against the federal government would lead to cuts in aid for L.S.U.

Potential good teachers left behind

NYT, 2/11 — To the Editor: I was intrigued by your phrase "placing a qualified teacher in every classroom," seemingly mandated by No Child Left Behind. Does anybody really believe that there is an untapped magic pool of "qualified teachers" out there waiting to be placed in the classrooms of the disadvantaged?

The way to guarantee qualified teachers is to train and nurture those who have already chosen teaching as a career....

I taught for more than 20 years in the New York City school system, all of them in disadvantaged areas. I watched earnest, hard-working, mostly new teachers succumb and ultimately fail in a system that featured little or no support, thoughtless supervisors, sub-par physical plants and a general feeling that they were disdained by the central board and the public in general.

I submit that for No Child Left Behind ever to succeed, we must first incorporate a module entitled "No Teacher Left Behind."



To fix health, give profits the axe

NYT, 2/24 — To the Editor: Re: "How the G.O.P Can Fix Health Care" (Op-Ed, Feb. 22):….

Having read the "fixes" that the Op-Ed contributors offered, I find it almost laughable to read their dialogue of "how to."

Free enterprise, the primary platform of their arguments, is the primary reason we are in the fix we are in….

The only way to resolve our health care dilemma is to take the primary motive of profit out of the equation….

Profit is biggest cause of hunger

NYT, 2/14 — To the Editor:…. In the United States, one in eight people is hungry, and the number of hungry people worldwide recently surpassed one billion….

"Feeding people" through charity is merely a Band-Aid.

Food is a human right, yet we allow those in power to treat it as a commodity to be bought and sold by profiteers interested in a quick buck….

US uses fascist Israel to bully Iran

NYT, 2/11 — To overcome China's traditional allergy to sanctions [on Iran], Mr. Obama has sent aides to Beijing to convince Chinese officials that there is something worse than sanctioning Iran: letting war break out between Israel and Iran.

They have described the prospect of oil cutoffs in the Persian Gulf, and instability that would threaten China's daily shipments if Israel believed Iran was nearing nuclear weapons capability and attacked.

Working class frozen out again

NYT, 2/14 — Washington — President Obama's plan to create jobs and rein in energy costs through a steep increase in money for weatherizing homes of low-income Americans has so far borne little fruit, with many of the bigger states meeting less than 2 percent of their three-year goals to date….

Far into the nation's winter heating season, the program for the most part has neither saved energy nor put people to work….

Many states either furloughed the state employees who would administer such programs or instituted hiring freezes….

MORE ITEMS AVAILABLE ONLINE: www.plp.org

Palestine-Israel: Combating Nationalism Key to Workers' Unity

Part II

(Part I — CHALLENGE, 3/3 — detailed Israel's attacks on Gaza, its apartheid conditions enforced on Palestine, the racism towards Arabs and Muslims and relations between Israeli and U.S. rulers.)

In Palestine there were mass uprisings against Israeli rule in 1987 and 2000, but today there is very little resistance. Since 1990, the governing Fatah party has negotiated with Israel, with the U.S. as mediator, and has become the administrator of much of the West Bank, without ever achieving independence. Most Palestinians view Fatah as corrupt and incompetent. It has now even taken over many internal policing duties from the Israelis.

To protest Fatah, in 2006, the majority (even Christians and secularists) voted for Hamas, which offers only regressive Islamic fundamentalism. Most Palestinians are completely disengaged from either party, but a vacuum exists in the middle. Even the small groups that do continue activism focus on single issues, like the Israeli-built Wall or the fascist judicial system. All are nationalist-oriented, calling for an independent Palestinian state, without examining the nature of the current society or what they need to build.

Palestine and Fatah are dominated by a small number of relatively wealthy families. The masses are poor workers and farmers. These relations will not change in an independent Palestine, leaving poverty and inequality intact. History has repeatedly demonstrated that the fight for the working class' control of society cannot be postponed, since local ruling classes, and the rich imperialists who control them, continue to run society in the same old way in the "liberated" state.

A nationalist outlook also cuts off the possibility of alliances with workers in Israel, some of whom are also oppressed, especially recent and darker-skinned immigrants and the super-exploited temporary workers Israel imports for its lowest-paid jobs.

In Israel, there is also some limited opposition to government policy. About 5% of young people resist mandatory military service, and are imprisoned. A small group of veterans has spoken out about the atrocities they've seen in Gaza and other places in the occupied territories. Some Israelis object to the depths of degradation of, and cruelty to, the Palestinians. However, their demands are usually for "peace" and an end to the military occupation, without considering the role Israel plays for Western imperialism or the class relations in their own society.

Many in Israel and Palestine hoped that Obama would actually represent a new U.S. policy and bring change to the area. They didn't realize that Obama represents only the interests of the U.S. ruling class, which do not change no matter who is President. In fact, a position paper prepared for Obama before he took office only reiterated the old U.S. call for "two states," dominated by Israel economically and militarily. Before his inauguration, Obama was silent as Gazans were being slaughtered.

Before our trip to this area we prepared a document which reviews its imperialist history, indicating the weakness of nationalism and calling for an egalitarian communist society. We were fortunate to meet some young Israelis who agree with this position and will begin working with us. Throughout our travels in Israel and the West Bank, we distributed 50 CHALLENGES and as many position papers to activists we met along the way. As we continue to follow up with these friends, we will attempt to stimulate a multi-ethnic communist movement so badly needed in Israel/Palestine. ✪

Correction: Part I (CHALLENGE, 3/3/10), has a typo. It says that Israel began "building up Hamas in the 1950s as a counterweight to the secular nationalist Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)."

The years are incorrect; the PLO was not formed until 1964, and Hamas didn't form until 1987.

International Women's Day:

Women Lead Class Struggle vs. Capitalism's Special Oppression

March 8 is International Women's Day (IWD), symbolized by the 1908 New York City march of 15,000 women demanding better pay and shorter hours. In 1910 the Socialist Second International held the first International Women's Conference and established International Women's Day. It has since celebrated many women's struggles — including the 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire and the women's march to the municipal Duma (council) in Czarist Russia in early 1917, which helped spark the Bolshevik Revolution.

Internationally, workers will commemorate this month and day to honor the struggle against the special oppression of women — sexism — and the capitalist system that promotes it, although the bosses and their media will use it to pay lip-service to women's struggles. We must recognize that this special oppression is an integral and necessary part of capitalism, which must be fought every day, not just on International Women's Day or during Women's History month.

Fight to smash capitalism in order to smash sexism

Exploitation of women hasn't always existed nor have conditions become better; it has simply changed in form. In primitive communal society men and women's labor was valued equally. In early class society, women were primarily unpaid domestic workers. As capitalism's needs shifted during industrialization, super-exploitation of women in factories began. The ruling class uses the special oppression of women — like racism and nationalism — as a tool to oppress the entire working class.

There are many ruling-class ideologies that claim to be anti-sexist, like Feminism. Feminism blames men for sexism and wants women workers to unite with their female bosses. The bosses misdirect many women workers' anger against the ruling class and towards men, a divide-and-conquer strategy. For men, instead of fighting sexism and revolting against the bosses, they're taught to take their anger out on women.

As communists, we fight for the unity of women and men on and off the job to smash the bosses!

Today, women are super-exploited globally, attacked by the U.S. racist destruction of welfare (especially black and Latino women); paid $2 a day in China's vast manufacturing economy and in Mexico's maquiladoras; subjected to mass rapes in the Congo's wars for diamonds and resources; victims of extreme anti-woman bias of Islamic and Christian fundamentalists; and murdered, raped and forced into prostitution in the U.S. imperialist war in Iraq.

Women already make up more than half of the super-exploited sub-contracted manufacturing jobs in the U.S., while remaining the principal childcare givers. Women are still paid less than men for similar work, keeping all workers' wages lower. The majority of women workers receive no wages for their work. Unpaid housework (cleaning, shopping, cooking) and child-rearing is also essential to producing the labor power that creates profit for the bosses and the next generation of workers. Because this work is done in the home and is seen as "natural" for women, it is not seen as profitable for the capitalists.

Capitalist culture — music, poetry, movies, television — is more profitable because it perpetuates capitalist sexist gender roles that help maintain the system. "Successful" women in entertainment like singer Rihanna and singer Shakira promote near-nudity and sexual availability as qualities of powerful women. In Rihanna's video for her song "Hard," she wears a Kevlar and an open shirt with tape covering her breasts, straddling tanks, and ordering soldiers to fire their weapons in the desert, presumably the Middle East. The idea is that imperialist war and women-controlled sexism are something to be proud of. Shakira once refused to wear high heels but in her recent video for her song "La Loba/She Wolf" she rolls around in a nude-colored bodysuit in a cage. The idea is that she must emerge at night as a she-wolf because her boyfriend/husband is boring and controlling.

The special oppression of women divides the working class, and dehumanizes women. Economic exploitation makes women a commodity, leading to degrading them as sexual objects and prostitutes, victims of physical violence, rape and enslavement worldwide. We must ensure more woman — especially as soldiers and workers — take the lead in the effort to destroy the system that created and maintains the special oppression of women, racism and its exploitation of all workers. Only by black, Latin, Asian and white men and women workers uniting can the entire working class end the oppression of capitalism. Communism is the only system that values women as workers and allows all workers to reach their full potential. JOIN US!

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU: Write to CHALLENGE with your stories of anti-sexist class struggle. ✪